

# The Newlove Earthworks, Clark County, Ohio

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The Newlove Earthworks consist of two earth enclosures in Section 29, Harmony Township, Clark County, Ohio, originally described by John MacLean (1886). Among the more spectacular and best preserved of Ohio's smaller Woodland earthworks, the elliptical to circular enclosures are particularly unusual in that they were constructed on a hillside and are immediately adjacent (35 feet apart) to one another.

MacLean examined these earthworks exactly one hundred years ago, on May 23, 1885, accompanied by Professor J. W. Freeman. According to MacLean, "only saplings were growing" upon the earthworks when the site was first discovered. His sketch map of the site is shown in Figure 1.

MacLean provides detailed measurements, which we have not field checked. According to him, the larger, elliptical earthwork is 320 by 250 feet in diameter, with the gateway being 33 feet wide. The wall varies from 4 feet to 7 feet 8 inches high and is 25 feet wide at the base. An interior ditch extends around the entire perimeter, except for the gateway.

Only 35 feet to the northwest of this ovate earthwork is a second, smaller, circular enclosure 560 feet in circumference, with the wall 5 feet high and 25 feet wide at the base, also with an interior ditch.

The only other published reference to the Newlove earthworks appears to be a brief mention by Arthur Altick in connection with his description of the "Old Fort Trail" (Altick 1935), a trail which passes along the ridge south of Beaver Creek and is still visible in the woods to the east of the Newlove earthworks.

Apparently associated with Altick's 1935 article is an unpublished map (Fig. 2) of the Newlove works found in the Clark County file, Dept. of Archaeology, Ohio Historical Society. Altick's map does not appear to be as accurate as MacLean's sketch map, but it is reproduced because it shows that the western edge of the smaller enclosure had been destroyed by 1935 and indicates two "habitation areas" adjacent to the enclosures. This and the phrase "Field Explorations" suggest that Altick may have conducted test excavations at the site. Of course, any material recovered from the site would be of considerable importance in attempting to determine the age of the Newlove earthworks; but, unfortunately, several inquiries to the Clark County Historical Society, where

Altick's collections are housed, have not determined whether any material from the Newlove earthworks exists there or not. Lacking any tangible evidence, it can merely be suggested that the site is Woodland and may be Middle Woodland, based solely upon the proximity of the earthworks to the Hopewellian Manning Mounds (Altick 1941-1946; Seaman 1982), which lay approximately one mile to the north.

The authors visited the Newlove works in 1980, when the accompanying photographs were taken. The site is now in sparse woods and pasture. Viewed from a distance (Fig. 3), the larger enclosure looks much like a land slip detached from the gravel ridge, but closer inspection shows that in fact it is an artificial enclosure, earth from the ditch having been used to form the outer wall. A composite view of the larger earthwork is shown in Figure 4, looking into the fort (west-southwest). Figures 5 and 6 give some idea of the dimensions of the "moat" or ditch along the western side of the larger earthwork. The mound-like rise on the interior of the enclosure may simply be part of the original hillside, as suggested by MacLean's map, or it may be an artificial mound, as suggested by Altick's sketch. Only testing or excavation would determine this point. The southern portion of the smaller enclosure is shown in Figure 7. The northern half has been destroyed by a farm lane. Nor could the "gateway" in either enclosure be readily discerned.

Aside from the precise age and cultural affiliation of these earthworks, the major question is why they were built on a hillside. Two possibilities are suggested. Obviously, utilizing the slope of the hillside reduced the amount of excavation necessary to construct the earthwork, though the result suffers esthetically. It is also possible that the site was chosen because the slightly higher elevation provides a drier activity area than the adjacent, marshy stream valley.

Along the wooded ridge to the east of the Newlove earthworks, as Altick (1935) indicates, the distinct remnants of what appears to be an Indian trail can still be seen. The "Old Fort Trail," as Altick called it, is still a good half-foot deep, though it does not show well in photographs. Altick was also able to discern a branch of the path leading toward the larger of the two earthworks, though this no longer seems to be evident. We are not prepared to affirm the contemporaneity of the earthworks and the

trail or, for that matter, to suggest a cultural/chronological designation for the earthworks any more specific than "Woodland."

## References

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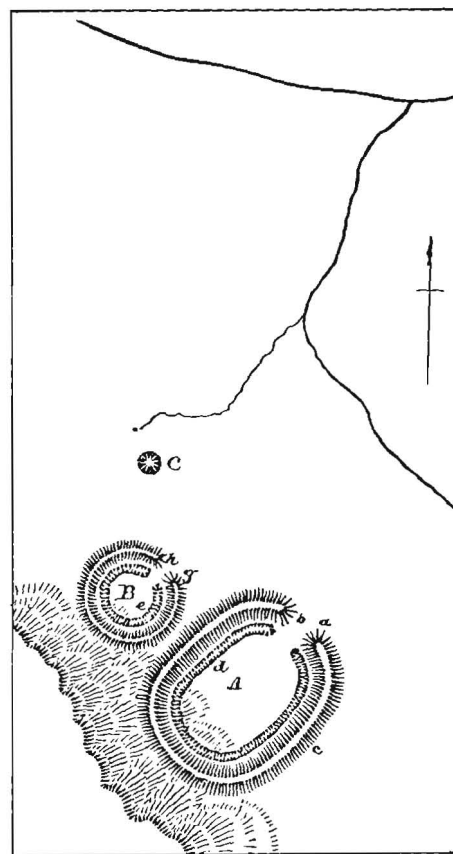


Figure 1. (Murphy) MacLean's 1885 map of the Newlove earthworks.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SKETCH MAP OF  
THE INDIAN FORTS  
PREHISTORIC EARTHWORKS  
HARMONY TOWNSHIP  
CLARK COUNTY, OHIO.  
FIELD EXPLORATIONS  
BY  
ARTHUR R. ALTICK  
1935

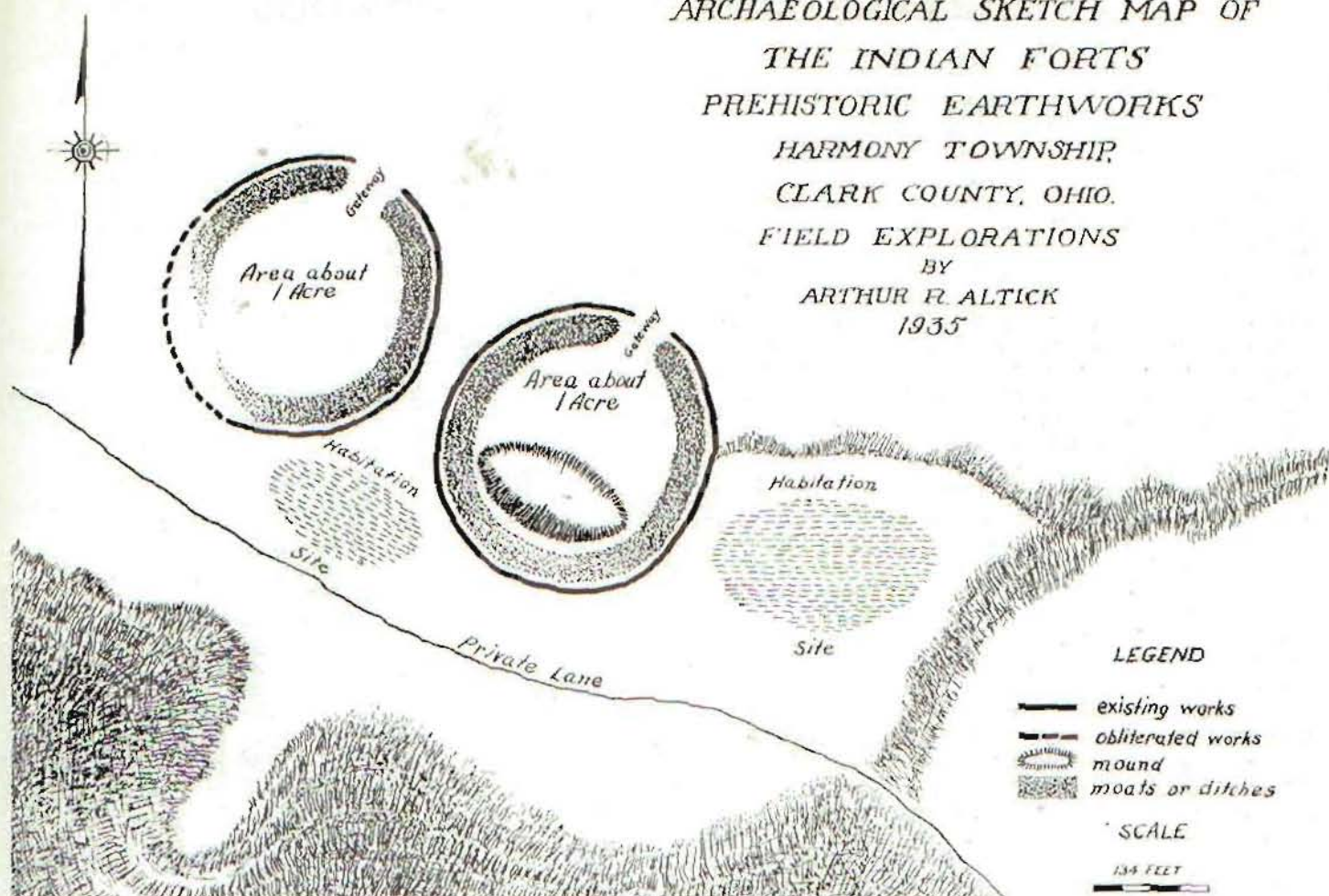


Figure 2. (Murphy) Altick's 1935 map of the Newlove earthworks.



Figure 3. (Murphy) The larger of the Newlove earthworks, looking west.



Figure 4. (Murphy) A closer view (composite) of the larger enclosure.





*Figure 5. (Murphy) The interior ditch and interior "mound" of the larger earthwork, looking north.*



*Figure 6. (Murphy) Another view of the interior ditch associated with the larger earthwork, looking south.*



*Figure 7. (Murphy) The southern portion of the smaller of the Newlove earthworks, looking southwest.*